1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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an enemy; and each took from among the property as nearly as possible such objects as he had actually captured in war. One who had stolen horses would take a horse; one who had taken a gun from an enemy would pick out a gun. While this was being done, or soon after, the dancers were dancing, concluding with a race similar to that in the crazy-dance. This marked the end of the ceremony. 796

There were several degrees of distinction in this dance. Two men had crooked lances wrapped with otter-skin. In four places these lances were tied about with small strips of white fur from which a pair of eagle-feathers hung. These lances were called nouçä"ts'ta". Two other lances were straight, and wrapped with jack-rabbit skin. These also bore feathers. A single dancer had a rattle of the globular shape common on the Plains. Half of the rattle was painted red, and half blue; and feathers were attached both to the top of the rattle and to the bottom of its handle. These regalia of honor were given to men renowned in war. A pipe was brought such a man, and if he thought himself entitled to the honor, and was ready to accept it, he took the pipe. If a man felt that others were really braver than himself, or had some other reason, he refused to take the pipe. One informant stated that he had declined the proffered honor because his wife's brother had recently died. The rank and file of the kit-fox dancers are said to have worn belts of prairie-dog skin. How far these corresponded with the biitaha"wu belts of the Arapaho is uncertain. The fur-wrapped crooked and straight lances are certainly similar to the crooked and straight lances indicating the second and third degrees in the Arapaho biitaha"wu. 796 554 293 [534]

Two girls took part in this ceremony. They were girls who were much thought of and beloved by their relatives. One of the dancers carried a kit-fox skin, the inside of which was painted blue. His companion had the rattle that has been described. While he rattled, the other, holding the skin by the neck and the tail, pointed it at the other dancers. These ran off, and this seems to have been the signal for the beginning of the dance. The two girls followed these two men everywhere. Their parents and relatives gave away great quantities of property in the dancing-lodge. Something similar is found in one of the Cheyenne society-dances, in which four young women accompanied the dancers from place to place. 796 857 593 [177]

Nothing was learned about the origin of the kit-fox dance, except that it is said to have been given by the kit-foxes, which is like what the Cheyenne tell of their analogous society. 796

A neck-band of badger-skin is the only object secured said to have been used in the kit-fox dance. To the end of it a tip of whitish rabbit-fur is attached. The lower part of the piece, which bears this rabbit-fur, hangs down the dancer's back. The upper portion, which is about four inches wide, is slit for a distance of a foot. Through this slit the head is inserted. [292]

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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CHAPTER VI

KINSHIP BEHAVIOR

Much of the more formalized behavior expected between particular categories of relatives among the Gros Ventres has survived the many changes in their economic, political, and religious structure. It is one of the few aspects of their older culture which can be observed as functioning at least partially. Although the economic side of the obligations has had to be reduced markedly under modern conditions, the attitudes accompanying avoidance and joking are still deeply ingrained in those of middle age and in older persons.

All in all, the type of behavior which indicated respect was extended to include by far the greatest number of relationships,—freedom being allowed only between those individuals considered to be related as grandparents and grandchildren, as siblings of the same sex, and as in-laws of opposite sex but of the same generation.

Parents

The parent-child relationship was characterized by a kind of reserve that tabooed any light talk, especially joking about sex or marriage. If the subject were approached in a serious way, however, it could be discussed between parent and child of like sex. A woman could, for instance, go to her divorced or widowed mother and tell her: "So-and-so wants you, will you not go and live with that man?" But she would not think of acting as intermediary in such a proposal to her father.

Throughout life children were supposed to address and to refer to their parents only by relationship terms,[1] never by personal name. Further, a son would be shamed by any incident even remotely connected with sex, in which he was involved, should it be

[1] The kinship terminology given by our informants agrees in detail with that in Kroeber, 1902, p. 9.

alluded to or occur in the presence of either his father or mother. To appear unclothed in each other's presence would be embarrassing to father and son alike. A woman refrained from any conversation or action that would call the attention of her father to the fact that she was menstruating or pregnant. An example of the attitude in this regard came to attention recently. "A woman, who was walking along the road near her house one evening, suffered a miscarriage. Instead of being taken to her own house nearby she insisted on being taken to a neighbor's, her reason being that her father and a few of his friends had been at her home when she had left and she would be 'ashamed' to appear in front of him in her condition."

It would seem that in some ways mothers had closer ties with their daughters and fathers with their sons. If, for example, parents disagreed about something their children did, each took up for the child of like sex. A man said to his wife: "You leave the boy alone, he's *my* boy," and a woman would say the same regarding the daughter. Or had a child done something to disgrace the parents, the wife was likely to upbraid her husband, if a boy were the culprit, by telling him: "Your son did so-and-so!" Should the daughter have been at fault, her father would speak in similar vein to his wife. In cases of adoption, too, a woman claimed a girl and a man, a boy.

On the other hand, in circumstances where parents could publicly show pride in their children, it often happened that a woman gave presents away in honor of her son and a man in honor of his daughter. It was customary, too, that if a young man had done something especially noteworthy at war, anyone could approach his mother and ask for whatever was wanted, and she would give it. Middle-aged women, whose sons were in World War II, joked with each other along these lines when news of their sons came from the front. Unfortunately, however, adverse economic circumstances precluded the full carrying out of the custom.

Attitudes of respect and reserve between parents and children are extended to include all of parents' siblings and their spouses, special emphasis being put on father's sister and mother's brother. Kinship terms reflect this situation. The term "father" includes father's brother, male cousin, mother's sister's husband; "mo-

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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in-law to do anything of the kind for her mother-in-law. So I gave that daughter-in-law two horses." 606

Although economic obligations were not incumbent, the relationship terms were used, and avoidances practiced, between parents-in-law and the brothers and sisters of the man and wife respectively. It was explained: "The brothers of a man respected his mother-in-law because in the old days it could happen that if a man died his brother might take the wife. And the same with a woman, because they had the custom of giving all the girls in a family to the same man if they liked him." [587]

Siblings of Opposite Sex

Among members of the same generation, the most marked respect was exhibited between siblings of opposite sex, and was extended to include all cousins. There was no relationship term for "cousin," all using sibling terms of address and without distinguishing between parallel- and cross-cousins. 593 605 [601]

Since a girl was removed from her own family at an early age and was brought up in a different household, actual face-to-face contact between brothers and sisters was slight. Nevertheless, their attitudes toward each other had important consequences with many ramifications. As interpreted by the Gros Ventres, the basic relationship between siblings of opposite sex gave clues to understanding expected behavior in several other categories of kinship, —in the avunculate and amitate, as well as in the relations between in-laws of the same sex and generation.

If it could possibly be avoided, brother and sister did not speak to nor look directly at each other. They communicated through a third person. Gros Ventres, who are today in middle age, explained how embarrassed they were as children when the authorities did not understand "the proper way of doing things." For instance, the good sisters and priests in charge of St Paul's, which at that time was a boarding-school, insisted as a privilege for the boys that they visit their sisters on Sunday afternoons in the girls' part of the school! How deeply this feeling of respect penetrates was brought home to the present author by the following incident. "One day she was with Mary and Coming Daylight, while waiting for Charles Buckman, who was to drive her to another part of the

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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605 593 Reservation. She heard the car drive up and, without thinking how it might be interpreted by the other two women, exclaimed: 'Oh, there is my man! I must go!' Since in that neighborhood 'my man' is commonly used to indicate husband or lover, Mary laughed. Almost immediately, however, she caught herself and straightened her face, remarking: 'I shouldn't have even thought that or laughed like I did. That man is my cousin and I should be ashamed of him.' Furthermore when Mary went out with her to get in the car, Charles insisted that Mary sit in the back seat so that everybody could see that they rode in the same car only to accommodate the white woman. Mary remarked later on: 'It is funny, but I just can't bring myself to sit down and have a conversation with my men-relatives, like white brothers and sisters do. I still have a feeling it is an awful thing to talk to my brothers, male cousins, father-in-law and Indian sons-in-law,—although I don't mind in the least talking to my white son-in-law.'"

Brother and sister were expected to grant each other's requests whenever it was in their power to do so and without complaint, regardless of the inconvenience which might be involved. The following incident illustrates how sensitive the Gros Ventres were on this point. "When the present Mrs. Takes-the-Bow was a small girl, she often was sick. One time her father's sister came into the lodge and muttered to herself: 'Oh you are just using up all my medicine in doctoring you—what is wrong with you!' Unfortunately the child's father overheard this impatient comment and was deeply hurt, because very seldom would a woman say anything like that in front of her brother. So he decided: 'My sister considers me a lot of trouble, and if that is the way she feels about it I shall never request her services again.' He meant exactly what he said. He left immediately to go on a war party. Careless of his life, he recklessly rode into the midst of the enemy and was killed."

593 782 721 One way of showing how much a woman thought of her brother was for her to make offerings in his behalf. When young men were going off on a war party, the sister of one of them might go outside the lodge and make a promise along the following lines: "I will give my finger as offering if my brother will come back a great warrior." It was considered a great honor, of course, to

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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have someone come back a real hero, and, although such a promise to torture oneself could be made in regard to other relatives, "it was usually a sister who thought so much of her brother who did that." Other forms of sacrifice which a girl might practice on her brother's behalf would be to take a fine robe, or something else of value, and stick it on top of the lodge saying: "I offer this that my brother may come back with good luck, bringing something fine from war." This could be even more specific in that a girl could offer, say, the tip of her finger, if her brother would bring back a particular thing, such as a scalp or a horse or a weapon. Again, should her brother be ill or wounded, a woman would be exceedingly concerned and might go so far, as in one case recorded, of promising that if he should recover she would join the Women's Lodge—" which was considered a great thing to do for your brother."

Usually a man would have some voice in regard to his sister's marriage and, if he were the one who made the arrangements, he received the larger share of the bride-price. It was said, too, that a brother would be especially concerned regarding his younger sister's moral conduct and might take it upon himself to keep her in line. Although parents would feel the disgrace of an erring daughter, a brother was expected to react violently. If her husband failed to punish his wife for adultery, her brother could kill her. Some instances were given, too, in which the man took his own life indirectly, by riding into the midst of the enemy without taking any precautions, because he felt so keenly the dishonor his sister who was unfaithful had imposed on him.

Maternal Uncle and Paternal Aunt

"Because a brother and a sister thought so much of each other, they were expected to be good to each other's children." If a woman had several brothers, it was the eldest who assumed the duties of the maternal uncle and his relationship with his nephews was a direct one. Should the eldest brother be unable to undertake the responsibility another brother or male cousin was expected to do so.

The maternal uncle was supposed to watch his sister's children closely even though her husband was on the scene. If he did not

603 versa. Grandparents, for instance, can tell folk-tales and stories, the subject-matter and details of which no parents would mention in the hearing of their children." A woman would think nothing of teasing her grandmother about men. The following is typical of the milder sort of joking which is customary, but which would be considered highly improper toward parents. "Coming Daylight's granddaughter came into her house to borrow a knife. The old woman told her: 'Don't lose that knife. I have had it for a long time and I love that knife.' Whereupon the granddaughter replied: 'Yes, you love that knife just like you love your sweethearts!' and the several women present had a good laugh over this joke." Again, Coming Daylight herself told of an old man who was grandfather to her maternal uncle and thus also her "grandfather." She said: "One day when I was still a young woman, this old man asked me why I didn't come to him to obtain [831] medicine power from him. I replied: 'Oh, I wouldn't come to you because I know that you are one of those medicine men who includes sexual intercourse as payment, and if I came to you, you would try to have me too!' Of course I could never have said that to anyone in my parents' generation."

Grandparents are said to have been indulgent toward their [868] grandchildren. They might occasionally give advice, and indeed it was expected that a grandmother would train her granddaughter not only in skills and techniques, but also prepare her for what to expect on the physical side of marriage, warn her not to arouse her husband's jealousy, etc. When in trouble, however, a grandchild could discuss any matter with his grandparents. They would give counsel, but never scold. A man would usually not count on material aid from his grandparents, but, on the other hand, he was not expected to contribute to their support to any greater degree [431] than he would to that of any old persons were they in need—namely, by giving an occasional present of food or clothing.

Siblings of the Same Sex

593 The relationship between brothers on the one hand and between sisters on the other was a more or less casual one. Family loyalty and ordinary generosity were expected, but formality was lacking. "A girl and her sisters could, of course, laugh and joke and tease

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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about sweethearts or any other topic they wish, always providing that there is no other person present whom they must 'respect,' just as they can laugh and joke with women who are not related to them at all." Women who are on good terms tease and joke with each other a good deal. Coming Daylight and Singer for instance made remarks relating to sex whenever opportunity afforded. As an example, when one of them was telling of her marital experiences she said: "I was willing enough to get married, but I didn't like that particular old man to whom they gave me. I wrapped myself up in a separate blanket and wouldn't let him get near me." Whereupon the other old woman remarked: "I wish I had been there, I would have held you down!"—and this was considered a great joke. Again, while talking about modesty, or rather the lack of it among Crow women, Singer said: "That was in the old days and Gros Ventre women were very careful. These Gros Ventre girls at the present time—I don't think they even wear breech-cloths!" And Coming Daylight retorted: "If you were young now, you wouldn't wear one either!" In this vein then the two old grandmothers teased the present author as their granddaughter, saying to her: "We thought you had a husband. Why didn't you bring him with you to see us? Is it because you are afraid that we would take him away from you?"

Brothers can discuss any matters they choose, love affairs included, but they usually do not josh and tease each other in public as do brothers-in-law, nor is the spirit of rivalry between them exhibited as it was with their enemy-friends.

Older brothers and sisters assumed a protective attitude toward younger siblings of like sex, and when in a position to do so would sometimes exhibit extreme generosity, although in this regard there was not the same sense of obligation which characterized the relationship with some other relatives. "It was considered unusual, for example, that Horse Capture, who had been urging his younger brother to be more sociable, gave away in his honor a horse and buggy on the occasion when the brother finally decided to join in the Grass Dance. But it was in line with the ordinary way of doing things that Horse Capture, who had been highly favored by his maternal uncle, privately gave to this young brother horses, as a start in life, when the maternal uncle failed to do

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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593 so." Brothers could borrow from each other without asking beforehand. Futhermore, an older man, who was married, might allow a younger unmarried brother to join the Crazy Lodge, lending his wife to stand in the place of a wife to him for ceremonial purposes.

Brothers- and Sisters-in-law

607 The greatest freedom was exhibited between a man and his
522 brother's wife, on the one hand, and his wife's sister on the other. Likewise a woman could say anything she chose to her husband's brother and to her sister's husband. Teasing and horseplay between brother-in-law and sister-in-law were not only permitted but expected. A favorite joke was for one to conceal in a strategic place within the lodge an "air cushion" consisting of a buffalo cow bladder, blown up and tied. When the other came in he was shown to the appointed place and his weight on the cushion caused a most embarrassing noise, much to the hilarity of all present. Taking it in apparent good nature, the victim would, however, bide his time to get even.

Another accepted type of trick was for one to make a laughing stock of the other by heavily blackening the eyebrows of the victim, while he or she was asleep. A rougher kind of play was also indulged in. Singer, for instance, said: "I was once thrown in the creek by my brother-in-law. It took me a long time to find opportunity for retaliation, because he was wary and stayed away from the creek when I was around. On one occasion though, when he started for his bath, I followed him, and, when he was on the brink of the creek, I sneaked up behind him and shoved him in yelling as I ran away: 'It took me a long time to get even with you!'" On another occasion she and her brother-in-law were partners in a game he made up. "The Gros Ventres had won in battle and this man said he was going to give a 'Victory Dance.' My sister and I joined the group, and, as we arrived, this brother-in-law of ours was singing all kinds of songs,—silly songs with the words all mixed up. Then he said: 'Each man take a partner. We are going to stand up all night. The first one who sits has to pay a fine!' So he chose me as his partner. Finally, after some time, he said: 'Wait a minute, I have to get a drink.'

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If a mother could not feed her child well, they used to supplement the mother's milk by broth from meat. Occasionally some woman could be found who would help out.[1] Coming Daylight, for instance, used to allow a son of her mother's brother to nurse, as his own mother was very thin and her milk was insufficient. Another time she nursed the infant son of her cousin whose wife, after he had deserted her, brought their baby to her husband and refused to take it back. Again, Mae's mother nursed several children not her own. When she was an old woman she would complain because she was not invited by these persons. She would fuss along these lines: "They never even invited me once. If it hadn't been for me, they would have starved when they were infants."

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Early Disciplines

The child was usually not weaned until it was two years old or more. Sometimes a child would be allowed to nurse until six or so, provided his mother did not become pregnant again. There was a boy who had started to school at six, and who would still run up to his mother to nurse when he had the opportunity. Many children would even run in from playing to get at the mother's breast. "It didn't seem to hurt them any!"

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Definite effort was made to wean the child when the mother became pregnant. "If a woman didn't realize she was in this condition and allowed the child her breast, the child would have a bad stomach and diarrhea." One way of weaning the child was to put nicotine from a pipe on the nipples. The sight of this so frightened the child that he would not try to nurse. If it was dark and he didn't see it and happened to taste it, he would raise an awful cry, but he would be cured. Pepper was also used in the same way. They would give the child as a "pacifier" a piece of meat, pounded soft, sweetened and tied in a soft white rag. The child would suck on this until he fell asleep.

It was when the new baby was born that they would have the most trouble with the child who had just been weaned. Many children were jealous of a new arrival. Coming Daylight said that they had to watch carefully lest an attempt be made to harm the

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[1] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

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593 infant. Some siblings, for example, would try to plug the infant's mouth with a rag or some other object. An occasional child would be unusually jealous and resent all younger siblings. One of Coming Daylight's own boys was like that. He would try persistently to get ahead of his little brother. The mother would be lying down with the infant at her side, and this little boy would try to snuggle in between her and the infant. He stuck close to her and wanted to accompany her everywhere, even when she left the lodge at night to attend to her necessities,— and this was after he was old enough to know he should not follow her at such a time. One of Cora's children was like that at the time the information was being gathered, jealous of the other children in the family and following her everywhere.

853 One of the first solid foods a baby was fed was a ball of cooked rose-berries mixed with grease. This was put on the end of a stick in lollypop fashion. Marrow, guts and rose-berry soup were considered the best food for growing, healthy children.

854 A newborn infant is called a "sack-baby." The sack was made of fine buckskin, or of buffalo calfskin with the fur left on one side, and was laced up the front. It was made just the same way for a girl as for a boy. A piece of rawhide was put inside the sack to stiffen it, and some rags were placed between it and the child's body to stuff it up and prevent chafing. The board was rectangular, rounded at the top, and reached only to the baby's neck. They made a little round cap out of calfskin, with little fur earmuffs that tied under the chin. They used to decorate their baby sacks nicely and sewed little deerhoofs thereon,—"They liked to have something rattle on their clothing."

When placing the infant in the sack they were very careful that its feet and legs should be properly placed. Singer remarked that in the old days everybody's legs were nice and straight and that it is only these "diaper babies" around here now who are bow-legged.

854 278 237 Small children, including infants, were washed each morning, —in winter rubbed with snow,—and then powdered. As a powder, buffalo chips were pounded on rawhide and then, "to sort of sterilize," hot stones were placed thereon. When the powdered chips were warmed, but not too hot, the stones were removed and the

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right off,—are about the first words a baby says. When a child is backward in learning to talk, the remedy is to feed him meadowlark eggs, hard-boiled. Cora says this treatment was very effective for one of her sons, and Coming Daylight fed them to one of her daughters. They all agreed, however, that the treatment may sometimes be too effective. If anyone is very talkative even today the favorite saying is: "His mother must have fed him meadowlark eggs."

The care of her baby was the first duty of a mother. Of course, if she were a co-wife, the other wives might help her, and in any case the grandmother might take a hand. But Coming Daylight often had no one upon whom she could depend, so she had to be extremely careful. For example, when she was married to Little Man and had an infant in the toddling stage, she would drape a blanket loosely about her hips and while she sat and did beadwork, the infant could play safely at her left hip inside the blanket. The old-timers, moreover, never left a baby alone. When her first child was born Coming Daylight was told by her grandmother never to leave a baby alone; that if it were absolutely necessary she should leave him even for a minute, she should take a small stick, blacken the tip with nicotine, and leave it in the swing or alongside where the infant lay. This was done to keep the "spirits" away. Even Mary feels strongly about leaving a child alone. She tells her daughter about it, but the daughter is very modern. The result is that frequently Mary stays home from a dance rather than leave a grandchild by itself.

If the mother of a young infant was going on a trip, for instance, to pick berries, she invited the baby's *bitä"tao* 'shadow, spirit, soul' saying: "Come on with us or we might leave you. We are going now." If one failed to do this, it would be like leaving part of the baby behind and the baby would be cross all evening.

Sometimes other children in the family would be called upon to look after the infant. They were apt to get tired quickly however and tell their mother: "Hurry up and take your baby or I will drop it." Girls were depended upon more than boys to look after younger siblings, and girls more or less were expected to do so "right from the beginning." The old women felt that formerly

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them, he was afraid to go to his own home, so he ran to a neighbor's. Jim's father found him there half-crying. He took Dwarf by the wrist and said: 'Come my friend.' He led him to his home and Dwarf thought he was going to be killed. On the contrary, however, Jim's father led him into his lodge and said: 'My friend, I am glad you made my boy cry. I have never laid a hand on him nor did I ever make him cry, and I'm glad you have done this.' He then gave Dwarf a big pile of meat and told him to eat as much as he liked and to take the rest home. As Dwarf was leaving Jim's father took a valuable Hudson's Bay blanket and cut it in two and gave him half saying: 'Here is this, use it for your blanket.' Then he took another half-blanket and said: 'Have your mother make leggins for you. Friend, I am glad you made my boy cry. I thank you for it. Now you can go home.' It just so happened, fortunately for Dwarf, that Jim Shortman was a beloved-child." [8]

Occasionally girls, or sometimes boys and girls together, formed a group in the evening to sing in front of the lodge of a rich family who they knew had such a specially loved child. The group danced and sang and then the woman of the lodge would invite them in. She would feed them and say that she was doing so in the name of that beloved-child.

Coming Daylight described how she joined groups who were going around the camp circle singing in front of the lodges of those who had returned successfully from a war party. This was before she was married and so she had to get permission from her grandmother. Mounted on a horse with a girl friend her own age, whose brother was supposed to keep an eye on them, they rode with the others. Singer admitted she had not participated in such singing parties when she was a child because she never had a horse to ride upon.

Much of the leisure time of children was seemingly spent in play which reflected the daily routine of adult life as well as many aspects of the life cycle. A group went quite far outside the camp circle, for instance, to play they were "married folk." If little boys went along with the girls, some would be "husbands," some "sons" and "sons-in-law." The "women" would tell their

[8] For details on the concept of the beloved-child, see Flannery, 1941.

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this meant that a young man's first wife was not necessarily "older" in years than he, but that she was "experienced" in marriage, having been either widowed or divorced, perhaps several times.

Only as an exception was a bachelor married to a child-bride. One case of the kind which was recalled concerned a young man who was a "beloved-child" and consequently highly favored by his parents. He however refused to "settle down" when his parents suggested various marriage partners to him, and acceded to their request only when they obtained for him the hand of a young girl who had not previously been married.

Young men just starting their careers were urged to seek as wives among the "older" women, those who were known as "good workers" and who had acquired some property of their own. A wife of this kind could help him become established, and "if he amounted to anything" it would not be long before he could take a second wife, perhaps a younger sister of his first one. Then, as he became more prominent, he would acquire one or two additional wives.[2] To this type of man child-brides usually were given. It was said that an outstanding man had three or four wives at the same time, but conditions were such that he would have had a dozen different ones in the course of his career.

A man was considered fortunate if he obtained as wife the oldest of several sisters as the chances were great that these others might be offered to him. "If a man married the oldest girl in a family, and her folks liked him and saw that he was a good provider and that he was trying to live right, they would give him the two or three others as they came of age." Many instances were given wherein several sisters were married to the same man. On the other hand it was said that, if a man, who was already married to one or more sisters, asked for another, he might be refused and that "there was nothing he could do about it."

Since the levirate was permitted, it was possible that a man could claim the wife or wives of his deceased brother. This was seemingly carried out infrequently, however, since only two instances could be recalled.[3] Of these two, one involved Coming

[2] For a discussion of the economic basis of polygyny, see pp. 73–74.

[3] "The brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case." Kroeber, 1908, p. 180.

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together!' so I jumped up and ran as hard as I could. Finally after wandering around a long time, not caring whether I lived or died, a man on horseback caught up with me. Telling me how dangerous it was to be out alone on account of possible capture by the enemy, he persuaded me to go back. Nobody said anything to me directly, but one of my husband's relatives did take up for me by saying insultingly to my husband: 'You would have such a one for a boss wife. She is ugly, and has a shaggy head, and she doesn't even know how to do a woman's work properly—blood runs out of the meat she prepares!' The older wife left me alone after that incident." 595

Nevertheless Singer admitted that in spite of her unhappy life with co-wives in two or three of her marriages, when she was married to Iron Bucket, she and her "rival" cooperated very nicely and were never jealous of each other or quarrelsome. All the women too agreed that, while the husband did not approve of hair-pulling and "jaw-fights" among his wives, and could resort to stern measures to prevent it, there were many polygynous households where peace and harmony reigned.

Authority of the Husband

The husband was expected to assume complete responsibility for his wife and had the right to enforce obedience. It was perhaps inevitable that some men used their authority in an arbitrary manner. The following was one among many examples offered in proof of this point. "There was a man who was known to be very stingy. On one occasion his wife cooked more meat than he thought she should have prepared. He was very angry with her and, in order to punish her, he made a big pile of the meat and forced her to eat every scrap of it. It made her very sick and she had to vomit a couple of times before she could get it all down. But she preferred to be sick rather than to get a beating." 593 562

It was said that wife-beating was very common and that in many cases it was unjustified. Singer gave part of her own experience as a sample. "My husband wouldn't allow me to go anywhere away from the lodge except to do the necessary jobs of getting wood and water. The whole time I was married to him I attended only one celebration. That time he more or less had to let

S93 S62 me go because by mother's brother was in the Sacrifice Dance and I was supposed to be there to give things away in his honor. He was mean about it, but I got to that one thing. Another time though, I was scraping hides and I heard it announced in the camp circle that a relative of mine had been killed at war. Of course I went right away to mourn for him. But when I got back, my husband was furious. He yelled at me: 'You ought to stay home and attend to your work!' and then gave me an awful beating."

It was usually of little avail for a woman to return home with grievances against her husband because it was assumed that a wife deserved the type of treatment she received. Generally her S93 S86 family would send her back to her husband promptly and often with a present for him to show their good will. Only under exceptional circumstances was the wife allowed to initiate separation from her husband. If he grossly neglected her and showed his indifference openly, she might be permitted to remain with her family. Should the husband not send for her, they were then free to arrange for her another marriage. Coming Daylight gave as an example her own experience, which was considered as somewhat unusual. "My uncle had arranged as our third marriage for my younger sister and me to go to a man who later turned out to be a poor provider. He seldom got buffalo meat, and he didn't water the horses, or do the other things he was supposed to. He was so busy chasing other women he didn't have time for anything else! One day, however, a friend of his came and told us that our husband was planning to publicly throw us away. His uncle came to see our husband that same day and tried to persuade him not to do it. Among other things he told him: 'You have such nice quiet industrious women. Just think of all the robes they have dressed for you!' But our husband just sat there with his head bowed and didn't say anything, and we knew then that he was going to do it. So I told my sister when he went out: 'We will get ready and throw him away before he has a chance.' I had a horse of my own, and we packed all our belongings as quickly as possible and went back to our uncle. When he found out what that man was going to do, of course he didn't make us go back. Our husband was in the wrong. He didn't

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have any reason to suspect us [of infidelity] so he shouldn't have been planning to get rid of us." 586

It was said that in case a husband abused his wife without reason his relatives remonstrated with him, reminding him, for instance, that if he acquired a reputation for ill-treating his wife he might have difficulty in obtaining additional wives of good reputation. Some claimed that his maternal uncle could go so far as to remove the wife from her husband's household "until he came to his senses." Such interference was however seemingly rare. A wife was seldom given the benefit of any doubt.

The husband had the right to punish, even with death, any de- [684] parture from the standard of chastity set for women.

Most of the harsh treatment accorded to wives was believed to 593 have been the result of just suspicion of their infidelity, where sufficient evidence was lacking to prove it. Girls were warned before marriage to so conduct themselves as to avoid their husbands' jealousy at all costs. They were told, for instance, that when visiting other women it was well to be chaperoned since otherwise a jealous husband could magnify an innocent visit into an incipient affair with the woman's husband. While it was con- [726] sidered within the proprieties for women to go out and count coups on the enemy fallen near camp, "they didn't approve of women chasing off on horseback to 'hit the enemy' because their husbands were sure to suspect they were off to meet some man." A girl was instructed by her relatives to yield willingly to her husband when he claimed his marital rights lest he interpret her reluctance as preference for another.

On the other hand, when there was reasonable proof of the 593 wife's infidelity, the husband was more or less forced by public 684 opinion to take some action against her. He was, however, allowed considerable latitude in choosing among several equally honorable alternatives.

The extreme punishment was that of death, and apparently it was not uncommonly applied. Among the cases described was the following which concerned a contemporary of Singer and Coming Daylight. "On one occasion a man discovered that one of his wives was missing. As usual in such circumstances, he inquired whether any man in the camp was unaccounted for. He soon

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learned that his wife had gone off with a certain one and set out in pursuit. He was in a rage as he met the lovers, who had turned back toward the camp. The man fled, leaving the wife to face her husband's fury. He commanded her to dismount and then tore her robe from her. After cutting off her breasts and her arms, he abandoned the body and returned home."

According to our informants, however, not all cases were so clearly defined. Some women lost their lives merely because their husbands were suspicious. A man who acted without sufficient evidence ran some slight risk that his wife's family would avenge her death, but it was usually assumed that the wife must have been guilty. This was the situation in regard to a cousin of Singer's about whom she gave the following account. "This cousin of mine was a very beautiful woman. Her husband's lodge was close to that of Sits Like A Woman, one of the most famous chiefs the Gros Ventres ever had. This woman was fleshing a buffalo hide one day, and the chief saw her there outside her lodge. He said to Coming Daylight, then a very small girl, 'Run over to that woman who is tanning and see what she says to you.' So, childlike, she ran over there and told the woman: 'Sits Like A Woman told me to come over to the woman who is tanning and see what she tells me.' The woman said: 'Sh-h, you mustn't talk like that.' Being young and innocent Coming Daylight didn't realize the situation, and reported to the chief that she had been hushed up. The chief said: 'Well, who would be afraid of him [the husband]. What is she afraid of him for?' Now the husband was inside his lodge at the time, and overhearing this, he imagined his wife was running with this great chief. He bided his time and it so happened that the woman, who was a friend of the chief's wife, went one day to that lodge and asked her friend for something to eat. She was really hungry, and while she was sitting there eating, her husband came to the lodge. The chief said: 'Come in. I will give you a drink.' But the man did not accept the invitation, and merely said to his wife: 'You needn't come back!' This boded no good, so the frightened woman went to her mother's lodge. Her mother was very much upset, and was calling for protection for her daughter, when the husband came with his gun and shot his wife six times. No one retaliated."

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co-keepers with her, but they or one of them would substitute for her in such minor duties as taking the Pipe out of the lodge in the morning and bringing it back in the evening when she was sick abed, or busy, or during her menses. During menses the co-keeper was not allowed to handle the Pipe. After Crow Bull, during his keepership, gave away his head wife and co-keeper, Digger, to Small White Cow in a drunken spree and Digger went away as wife to Small White Cow, Crow Bull's second oldest wife, Coming Day became co-keeper in Digger's place. If a man at the time of becoming keeper had a young wife with an infant, she and the infant were sent away to another lodge as infant-crying was not allowed in the keeper's lodge where the Pipe was.

The Flat Pipe keeper, if he had two or more children, chose one and one only of his children, more commonly a boy, to be Pipe Child. It was a strict rule that he could keep only one of his children with him; all his other children had to live elsewhere than in their father's lodge, because, for one important reason, the Pipe was jealous. Some keepers were such rigorists in the matter that they practically forgot all their other children.

The children that were put out of their father's lodge naturally found this hard and rebelled, but they were trained to take it as a matter of course. A special interest was taken by others in such children as they were felt to be unfortunate in being deprived of the care and affection of their own parents. These children were permitted to visit their father and mother but they were under restrictions when they did so. Their grandmothers or foster parents would instruct them how to behave on such visits. They could not stay long, much less sleep there. They had to sit quiet in a special place in their parents' lodge and not roam around in it freely. They had to stay mostly near the door and not go near where the Pipe was. They were strictly forbidden to play in their father's lodge when visiting there. If their mother gave them something to eat they could eat it. They could sit on her lap. But they could not talk loud or shout. When so visiting they were not at ease and felt sort of foreign and awestricken. The Boy thought that these children may have been jealous of their sibling, the Pipe Child, but in such case they would have had to keep

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their feelings to themselves, for any show of such feelings would be contrary to the deep veneration due to the Pipe and its official personnel. They had to be resigned to have that particular sibling as the Pipe Child. When the keeper gave up his keepership, some of his children might go back to their father's lodge but not necessarily all of them. Some had gotten used to living elsewhere and just remained there.

The Boy's own experience may further illustrate the foregoing situation.

He was born while his father, Lame Bull, was keeper of the Flat Pipe, and consequently he was born not in his father's lodge but in that of one of his grandmothers. His mother went back to his father's lodge, but she used to come to his grandmother's lodge to nurse and look after him. In his earliest years he had four or five "grandmothers" or great-grandmothers [real and classificatory] living, one of them his mother's mother. He stayed most of the time with his maternal grandmother and with her mother. It was from these grandmothers that he got most of the affectionate attention he craved and most of his early training and instruction. Every night, too, one or other of the grandmothers would tell old-time stories and Ni:hahat tales. After a while he was permitted to go to his father's lodge but only for a little while at a time, but he was not allowed to live or sleep there. He never addressed his parents as "father" or "mother," but only by their given names, although there was no taboo in the matter, and his younger brother Andrew Lame Bull used the former manner of address. The Boy as a child did not feel much inclined to "play baby" and sit alongside his father and mother, as other Gros Ventre children did, to get special attention, but he did act so elsewhere, around his grandmothers and great-grandmothers. He did not go to live in his father's lodge until he was about nine (or eleven?) years old, after his father had ceased being Pipe keeper, and by this time he was able to take pretty good care of himself, to ride horseback, and so forth.

All of The Boy's eight brothers and sisters—he was the ninth—who survived infancy were reared outside their father's lodge, except the one who was Pipe child. After Lame Bull's keepership

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ended, all of them just invaded their father's lodge. The Pipe child did not measure up to Lame Bull's expectations, so the latter's attention slowly centered on The Boy. Lame Bull, as an ex-keeper, still practiced some of the Pipe ceremonies, and The Boy came to act the part of "Pipe child" in these for his father.

Rite of Transfer

When the keeper of the Flat Pipe was about to transfer it to a successor he would invite to his lodge for a secret night meeting the surviving ex-keepers with their ex-co-keeper wives of both the Flat and the Feathered Pipes. The Feathered Pipe ex-keepers and ex-co-keepers were present purely as invited guests. They did not have any voice in decisions nor did they do any prompting. The first task of the assembled Flat Pipe group was to choose the new keeper, as previously described. The Flat Pipe ex-keepers and ex-co-keepers, further, remained with the transferring keeper and his co-keeper wife throughout the rite of transfer, to prompt and correct them in case they should forget, be in doubt about, or incorrectly perform some part of the rite. Two young men attendants, usually sons of keeper or ex-keepers, were present throughout the election transfer.

After the group had decided who should be next keeper, they quietly scattered and gathered together their relatives and reassembled outside the actual keeper's lodge. The whole party then proceeded quietly, at night before dawn when the camp was asleep, to the selectee's lodge, the keeper in the lead holding the bared Flat Pipe stem forward and slanting upward, with the bowl in his cupped left hand and the stem in his upturned right palm, at about breast height. One of the party, an ex-keeper or one of his sons or other kin, a physically powerful man, had been designated as the person to grab and hold the selectee in case he tried to run away.

The party usually succeeded in reaching the selectee's lodge without arousing anyone. On arrival thereat they all shouted noisily. This was the signal for the strong man to dash into the selectee's lodge and seize him. Any other member of the party could grab the selectee's wife who was to be co-keeper pipe

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*796 over and sat down with the principal vower and his grandfather and all six of them smoked the grandfather's filled pipe. When they had finished smoking, two young men selected for the purpose started to actually fell the tree. As soon as the tree began to totter, the four scouts shot at it and yelled, just as was done at the killing of an enemy in real warfare.

After the tree was "shot down," it was dragged in by the young men "soldiers," with much yelling and shooting, and was deposited at the spot where the Sacrifice Dance was to be held.

Then a recess was taken and those not obliged to fast ate. The [262] chief food eaten at the Sacrifice Dance was buffalo tongues and pemmican, both already prepared, which could be eaten in a hurry, for no one knew at what moment some order to be obeyed would be announced by the crier.

After the recess the "soldiers" went out to get the other poles [593] and the brush needed for the dance lodge. Each "soldier" would choose a woman, not his own wife, but "his sister-in-law, or any other woman of whom he was not bashful" to ride double with and accompany him. The women would dress up and stand outside their lodges waiting for the men to come along and put them on their horses. The woman sat on the saddle, the man riding behind her. Some women would run away so as to avoid going out with the men, "probably," Coming Daylight stated, "because these ones were afraid of their husbands." Coming Daylight herself had never so gone, but Singer had. "Some husbands," Singer commented, "were too jealous to allow their wives to go with other men to get branches for the Sacrifice Dance lodge."

*796 The poles and brush were brought in, and a number of hoisting 346 props were made. These props were made each of two tent poles; to one end of each pole a single short transverse connecting thong was fastened. The two divisions of "soldiers" the "talls" and the "shorts," each then split up into two subdivisions making four subdivisions in all. At the call of the crier, "Get ready," these four subdivisions began to march toward the hole, previously dug, for the center pole which lay alongside, all singing their parade song. On the way toward the spot, each of the four subdivisions had a number of the double-pole hoisting props, each prop being carried

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Between times, during the summer months, that is, when no sacred dance was in progress, the two soldier societies, the Stars and the Grass dancers (Wolves), would compete with each other in foot races or other sports or in gambling bouts.[16] The losers would have to "cook" or to do other things for the winners. The losers in formation, with one of them in front carrying the Crazy Dance badger pelt trimmed and fixed up and tied to one end of a stick, might go to where the winners were sitting in a sort of semi-circle. On arrival there, the man carrying the pelt would say: "We are also bringing the badger pelt. It, too, we lost in the bet,"—although actually the pelt itself had not been wagered. This was a dare or challenge to the winners to put up the Crazy Lodge, a challenge which they were "compelled" to accept. Some great man among the winners would then get up, take the badger pelt from the man who brought it, and make an exclamation meaning that he was glad and that he accepted the challenge. He and his fellow-winners of the same age-group would then at once send criers to announce their acceptance of the challenge and, to give notice that they would without fail carry through their acceptance, would get in formation and sing. When the Crazy Dance was so carried out it had the same prestige and it was performed with the same rites and observances, as when carried out to fulfill a vow.

Each of those men who joined the Crazy Dance joined with one of his wives or with a substitute for her. The chief although not the only role of these women was participation in the ritual grandfather sex-test to be described later. Some husbands were so jealous of their wives that they would do all possible to avoid joining the dance or having their wives join. This appears to have been the case with the husbands of Coming Daylight, who was a belle in her day. In other cases, as The Boy remarked, "the husband knew his wife's character and disposition, and if she were weak he did not put her to this test as he would be pretty sure that she would fail." Singer had never joined although some wanted her to do so at the time. "My husband," she said, "was advised not to let me do so because I was too young and I might make

[16] Cf. Flannery, 1953, p. 42.

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*796 ● 593 a mistake [ritual?] and besides it was a hard thing to do. I was too crazy yet, they said. At the time my husband's other wife was about to have a baby, and some wanted me to join so she would have a safe delivery, but the others did not let me do it." Then, too, if a wife were in her menses at the time of the dance, she to her embarrassment would have to say so and she would have to be substituted for. If a Crazy Dancer did not have a wife of his own he could borrow one, a sister-in-law or other woman with whom an avoidance or respect relationship did not obtain. Thus Little Man, Coming Daylight's husband, once gave permission to his unmarried younger brother, Spotted Bird, to join the Crazy Dance with her, but Spotted Bird declined on the ground of his being too young, although actually Spotted Bird took part in that Dance as an attendant, which made Little Man so angry that he would not give anything away during the Dance for Spotted Bird. "A man," said The Boy, "who loaned his wife to another man for the Crazy Dance had to be a strong man. And before he would lend any of his women he was pretty sure he was lending away the right one who had strong character because it was tough."

When a man made a vow or accepted a challenge to perform the Crazy Dance all and only the members of his own company such as Calves, Holding-on-to-dog's-tail, Having-breast-for-a-pillow, or other,—within the Stars or Wolves as the case might be, joined or were expected to join the dance with him. Actually, on at least some later Crazy Dance occasions, not all the members of the given age-group joined. When the crier announced the coming Dance, some of the men of the age-group involved might make remarks such as: "Well, these old men [the ritual grandfathers] are getting hungry for good times again! They want to play around! They are agitating for the Crazy Dance." And some might bypass that particular dance even though at the risk of being looked upon as jealous weaklings. "If," said The Boy "a man belonging to the age-group to which the vower of the Crazy Dance belonged failed to join the dance, without good excuse, he and his wife would catch it; this would be published, because he did not want to have his wife go through this [the ritual grandfather sex-test]." [626]